



SCIENCE
BASED
TARGETS

DRIVING AMBITIOUS CORPORATE CLIMATE ACTION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Consultancy support for FLAG Standard V2.0 revision

July 2026



sciencebasedtargets.org



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ABOUT SBTi

The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) is a corporate climate action organization that enables companies and financial institutions worldwide to play their part in combating the climate crisis.

We develop standards, tools and guidance which allow companies to set greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions targets in line with what is needed to keep global heating below catastrophic levels and reach net-zero by 2050 at latest.

The SBTi is incorporated as a UK charity, with a subsidiary SBTi Services Limited, which hosts our target validation services (together with SBTi, the “SBTi Group”). Partner organizations who facilitated SBTi’s growth and development are CDP, the United Nations Global Compact, the We Mean Business Coalition, the World Resources Institute (WRI), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

CONTENTS

- ABOUT SBTi..... 2
- CONTENTS..... 3
- 1. OVERVIEW..... 3
- 2. PROPOSED WORK..... 5
- 3. OUTPUTS AND TIMELINE..... 8
- 4. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE..... 8
- 5. RECRUITMENT PROCESS..... 9
 - 5.1. Timeline..... 9
 - 5.2. Clarification questions..... 9
 - 5.3. Submission requirements.....9
 - 5.4. Proposal structure..... 9
 - 5.5. Conflict of interest.....10
 - 5.6. Evaluation.....10
 - 5.7. Selection process.....10
- 6. INVOICING SCHEDULE.....10
- 7. TERMS AND CONDITIONS..... 11
- ANNEX 1. CONFLICT OF INTEREST QUESTIONS..... 12

1. OVERVIEW

The forest, land and agriculture (FLAG) sector, also known in the scientific community as the Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector, or just the land sector, has been historically difficult to address with GHG accounting and target-setting approaches. But FLAG nonetheless represents about 22% of net anthropogenic GHG emissions in tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (~13 GtCO₂e per year), with about half from agriculture and half from land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) (IPCC, 2022).

The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) plans to update its [FLAG Guidance](#), which was first launched in 2022. This revision is intended to build on the success of FLAG version 1, which to date has seen over 400 companies adopt FLAG targets since launch.

The overall objectives of the FLAG revision project are listed in the [Project Terms of Reference](#).

As part of the FLAG revision project, the SBTi is seeking an expert technical partner to focus on the technical work and outputs required to integrate the implementation hierarchy, scalable corporate farming programmes, and deforestation-free procurement pathways within the FLAG target setting framework.

The project is expected to commence in Q3 2026. The total budget allocated for this specific technical work is approximately **\$150,000 USD**. The scope of this work is funded by the SBTi via a grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

The scope of required services are outlined below:

The primary objective of this scope of work is to evaluate, define, and document key evidence on how the most important decarbonization levers can be robustly applied and scaled in key supply chains in the AFOLU sector. Specifically, the technical partner will provide evidence to inform how the CNZS V2 implementation hierarchy, scalable farming programmes, as well as deforestation and conversion-free (DCF) procurement pathways can be integrated into a revised SBTi FLAG.

The objectives of this work will be achieved through the development of at least 10 case studies of programmes that promote best practices for reducing GHG emissions in key farming systems. These will be selected and arranged by the SBTi, and will involve companies or groups of companies who have a validated SBTi FLAG target.

The case studies will detail the actions targeted by the programmes, the level of ambition, the incentives for participation and the funding level and mechanisms. Where a company in a case study buys commodities with deforestation risk, the case study will cover what the company is doing to move towards deforestation and conversion free procurement. Additionally, the case studies will present a summary of evidence on how commodity certificates are used to verify and substantiate key decarbonization actions, alongside broader recommendations on how these farming systems map onto the SBTi's recently introduced implementation hierarchy (e.g., activity level, activity pool, or sector level).

The case studies will be used to develop scenarios for scaling of farming programmes and deforestation free procurement. The project outputs will provide recommendations to the SBTi on the timeframes for the scaling of farming programmes as well as for the achievement of deforestation and conversion free targets.

2. PROPOSED WORK

The selected technical partner will provide comprehensive research, analytical drafting, and expert support across the following primary workstreams:

Task 1: Farming mitigation programme case studies

The core activity for this project is to carry out a minimum of 10 case studies (selected and arranged by the SBTi) of corporate programmes¹ that promote best practices to reduce emissions within agricultural supply chains. For each case study, the following should be assessed:

- Target group of farmers/growers/producers, specifically whether these are identified as suppliers to the food company(ies) sponsoring the project, or whether the case represents an activity pool or a sector approach.
- Targeted actions, within farming systems (e.g. cover crops, min/no-till, precision nutrient use, insetting, etc.) and beyond in landscape approaches (e.g. protecting and restoring peatlands, expanding forested area, managing forests).
- The ambition of the programme in terms of number of farmers, area covered, percentage of supply-chain, emissions reduction; and plans for scaling.
- Consistency of ambition for emissions reduction with targets set under FLAG (i.e. 30% reduction in 2030 under the cross-cutting pathway, or intensity reductions under commodity pathways).
- Other benefits targeted by the programme, e.g. productivity, livelihoods, resilience, nature.
- The programme design with respect to levers for performance improvement (e.g. knowledge transfer, provision of inputs, access to technology).
- Programme design with respect to incentives (e.g. mandatory participation from suppliers in order to supply the sponsor, or they are offered a long term contract or a price premium, or access to funding and finance).
- Programme funding requirements, including whether these are one-off or recurring.
- MRV approaches and robustness
- Progress implementing the programme, including barriers to implementation.

To deliver a comprehensive analysis of a minimum 10 SBTi-selected case studies, contractors are encouraged to maximise primary and secondary data to thoroughly map and evaluate the programme mechanics, FLAG alignment, and implementation barriers. Contractors should describe how they will integrate and balance desk-based research with primary interviews (e.g. company and independent subject-matter expert interviews). SBTi is

¹ Essential details of the programmes that form the basis of these case studies must be public as part of the published findings upon final delivery of the project

expecting 10 detailed case studies, followed by a shorter format (<500 words) for each case study for use in communication and engagement activities.

Applicants are encouraged to indicate their capacity and proposed pricing for developing additional cases beyond the minimum requirement of 10 case studies. If proposed, the cost and estimated effort per additional case should be clearly stipulated.

Task 2: Deforestation and Conversion Free (DCF) procurement

For case studies where the sponsor company purchases commodities with deforestation or other natural eco-system conversion risk, the following should be assessed:

- Approaches to assessing traceability of commodities and to deforestation and conversion-free procurement (e.g. direct approaches versus reliance on commodity traders), highlighting regional differences and reporting on variations in traceability across regions
- Progress moving towards deforestation and conversion free procurement.
- Likely extent of deforestation and conversion -free procurement by 2030, including barriers to achievement of 100% by this time.
- Cost-premia of achieving deforestation and conversion-free procurement.

Task 3: Scenarios for scaling of farming mitigation programmes and DCF procurement

Based on the case studies, scenarios should be developed for:

- Scaling of farming programmes to cover the whole of the agri-supply chain at or before the 2050 net-zero year, including dependencies, and a high-level assessment of emissions reductions.
- Identification and analysis of critical enabling factors, dependencies, and infrastructure required to support full-scale programme adoption (e.g., data systems, policy shifts, financial mechanisms), including an assessment of region-specific variations and local implementation barriers.
- Achievement of deforestation free commodity procurement, according to key commodities, including minimum level of deforestation free procurement in 2030 (ideally 100%).
- Evaluation of realistic trajectories toward meeting a minimum expectation of 100% deforestation-free procurement by 2030, highlighting specific acceleration levers or shortfall risks for highlighted commodities.

Task 4: Deliverables

Based on information gathered and summarised through tasks 1-3, a synthesis report will be provided to SBTi containing recommendations on the following topics:

- **Case studies report:** A report covering all case studies and all relevant details regarding these as required by task 1

- **Scaling scenarios & timelines:** Develop recommended scenarios and timescales for scaling key agricultural interventions across entire corporate supply chains up to 2050. Present this evidence in a format that can be used in evidence of updates to the [methods, metrics and pathways](#) framework for target setting in FLAG.
- **Implementation hierarchy and target implementation:** Practical recommendations for applying CNZS V2 concepts (including the implementation hierarchy and activity pools) alongside commodity certificates to substantiate decarbonization actions within a revised FLAG framework.
- **Deforestation and conversion-free procurement analysis:** Summarise options for SBTi to update requirements for companies setting FLAG targets with respect to deforestation and conversion free supply chains to ensure maximum plausible coverage, commercial viability (accounting for cost premia) and impact of commitments across high-risk commodities by target setting companies.
- **MRV approaches & feasibility guidance:** Develop action-based recommendations on how SBTi can refine its accounting, validation, and data collection guidance, grounded in real-world performance, scalability, and robustness of the MRV approaches identified in the case studies.
- **Implementation barriers matrix:** Develop a matrix assessment mapping the primary operational, financial, and structural barriers identified across all tasks, (highlighting regional-specific challenges and market differences) combined with specific policy and financial levers SBTi can integrate into the framework to help companies overcome these barriers.
- **Communications and engagement materials:** The synthesis report should also include a summarized version of each case study, for use in SBTi communications and engagement activities. The format of this will be established in collaboration with the SBTi.

Authorship and recognition

Technical partners will be acknowledged for their contribution to the work delivered through this collaboration.

3. OUTPUTS AND TIMELINE

The table below provides an overview of the key expected deliverables:

Deliverable	Proposed Timeline
Deliverable 1 - Case study summaries covering all details required by tasks 1 and 2: <i>(Tasks 1-2)</i> Desk research completed, primary engagement conducted, draft matrix assessment provided	November 2026
Deliverable 2 - Draft synthesis report and scaling scenarios: <i>(Tasks 3-4)</i> Scenario modelling complete, draft framework updates mapped, report drafted with recommendations, and short format case studies drafted	December 2026
Deliverable 3 - Final synthesis report and SBTi recommendations: Final report reviewed and delivered to inform revised FLAG standard	January 2027

Consultancy work should be completed and made available based on the above preliminary timelines. Please note that these timelines are tentative and may be subject to adjustments.

4. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The SBTi will consider all qualified candidates, including but not limited to independent contractors, academic institutions and consultancy firms. The contractor delivering this work should be able to demonstrate the following experience and qualifications:

- In-depth understanding of corporate target-setting, SBTi methods, and GHG emissions accounting standards.
- Technical knowledge of corporate GHG accounting for land-intensive sectors (SBTi FLAG Guidance, GHG Protocol Land Sector and Removals Standard).
- Advanced understanding of market-based accounting instruments, specifically the application, limitations, and principles of Environmental Attribute Certificates (EACs).
- Proven experience conducting systematic literature reviews, policy analysis, and drafting formal consensus or position papers for multi-stakeholder technical initiatives.
- Technical knowledge of relevant global frameworks and initiatives such as GHG Protocol Land Sector and Removals Standard, IPCC guidelines, and the Paris Agreement targets as they pertain to FLAG emissions and key emission intensive commodity supply chains in the FLAG sector.
- Global experience with good understanding of regional, sub-regional and local contexts in agriculture and land-use and best practice interventions for decarbonisation of key supply chains in this sector

- Excellent project management skills.
- Excellent analytical drafting skills.
- Where the candidate is a consultancy firm, it is desirable that they have a validated science-based target.

5. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

5.1. Timeline

This RFP is scheduled in the following timeline:

- Deadline for submitting questions: August 14, 2026
- **Deadline for proposal submission: August 21, 2026**
- Evaluation and interview period: August - September 2026
- Expected date of contract award: September 2026

5.2. Clarification questions

All clarification questions should be directed to flag@sciencebasedtargets.org.

5.3. Submission requirements

Applicants must submit their proposals in electronic format (PDF preferred) by the specified deadline to flag@sciencebasedtargets.org with the subject line: "Proposal – updating the FLAG target implementation". Late submissions may not be considered.

5.4. Proposal structure

Applicants are required to structure their proposals in the following specified format:

1. **Cover letter**
A brief cover letter introducing the applicant's organization, summarizing their understanding of the project requirements, and highlighting their key qualifications and experience relevant to the project.
2. **Executive summary**
A concise summary of the proposal, including an overview of proposed approach, scope of work addressing the deliverables, and any unique value propositions.
3. **Company/Organization profile**
Detailed information about the applicant's organization, including its history, core competencies, areas of expertise, and relevant experience in project management.
4. **Project team**
A description of the proposed project management team, including resumes of key team members, their roles and responsibilities, and any relevant certifications or qualifications.
5. **Methodology and approach**
A detailed description of the proposed methodology and approach for managing the project, including project planning, scheduling, risk and conflict of interest

management, communication and engagement strategies, and quality assurance processes.

6. **Budget and cost breakdown**

A comprehensive breakdown of the proposed budget, including all costs associated with providing project services, such as personnel, materials, travel, and any other expenses including tax details.

7. **References**

Contact information for at least three references from previous clients who can provide feedback on the applicant's performance and capabilities in working on the project.

8. **Appendices**

Any additional documents or materials relevant to the proposal, such as case studies, project experience samples, or organizational charts.

Proposals should be clear, well-organized, and directly address the requirements outlined in this RFP. Failure to adhere to the specified format may result in the rejection of the proposal.

5.5. Conflict of interest

Proposals must include a statement regarding any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest or conflicts of loyalty that the submitting organization is aware of, which could affect the delivery of the contract described within this RFP. The questions in Annex 1 of this RFP must be completed and submitted as part of the proposal.

5.6. Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Relevance and quality of previous work (30%).
- Demonstrated understanding of the project requirements (30%).
- Qualifications and experience of the team (15%).
- Budget and cost-effectiveness (20%).
- Conflict of interest management (5%).

5.7. Selection process

The selection process will involve initial screening of proposals, followed by scoring and ranking by an Internal Review and Selection Committee. Shortlisted candidates may be invited for interviews or presentations to further evaluate their proposals. The final selection will be based on the overall quality and suitability of the proposals submitted.

6. INVOICING SCHEDULE

The proposed invoicing schedule will be confirmed during the contracting phase:

- Tranche 1: (20%) within 30 days of the Effective Date after fully executed contract.

- Tranche 2: (50%) after the completion of deliverables by half of the period for the project.
- Tranche 3: (30%) after the submission of the final deliverables.

In each case subject to receipt by SBTi the deliverables.

7. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The selected candidate will be required to enter into a project contract with the SBTi. The contract will include standard terms and conditions related to intellectual property rights, confidentiality, termination, liability, and dispute resolution.

This RFP does not constitute a commitment to award a contract. The SBTi reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received or choose to discontinue this RFP. Individualized feedback will not be provided to unsuccessful RFP applicants.

ANNEX 1. CONFLICT OF INTEREST QUESTIONS

In order to adequately assess risk for conflict of interest, proposals submitted must contain the following questions to be answered as part of the RFP Submission. Where there is significant and/ or uncontrolled risk of conflict of interest or the conflict of interest questions have not been answered, the RFP applicant will not be accepted.

1. Are there any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest or conflicts of loyalty that you are aware of that could affect your delivery of the RFP Contract? Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Contributing to SBTi technical products in the past, as advisor or author, including but not limited to development of methodological positions.
 - Having any relevant party transactions, relationships or business dealings with the SBTi, its customers, partners or potential competitors.
 - Having involvement in, or serving on the board of directors or advisory board for any organization that may have current or potential business dealings with the SBTi.
 - Having any consulting relationships with organizations that could create a conflict of interest with your work at the SBTi.

Answer:

[If yes, provide a full description of the potential conflict of interest and suggested mitigation actions]

2. Do you have any personal or professional relationships with organizations or individuals, including those associated with the SBTi, that could lead to the perception of a conflict of interest with their duties at SBTi?

Answer:

[If yes, provide a full description of the potential conflict of interest and suggested mitigation actions]

3. Does your organization have a conflict of interest policy?

Answer:

[If yes, please include the policy as part of your RFP submission]

4. Additional conflict of interest assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to provide further details about any potential conflicts of interest that may impact the awarding of this RFP contract. Answers should be generated about your organization in global and not to the specific sub entities that have applied for this RFP.

Definition of terms used in this section:

- **Partners:** SBTi founding partners which are CDP, the United Nations Global Compact, the We Mean Business Coalition, the World Resources Institute (WRI), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

- **Vendors, contractors, suppliers:** a person or company that provides goods or services to the SBTi.
- **Customers:** Organizations that use SBTi standards, including those applying for target validation or having their targets validated.
- **Potential Competitors:** Organizations offering similar standards for corporate emissions reduction.

Section 1: Financial Conflicts			
Question	Response	Additional Information	Risk Rating (High, Medium, Low) <i>*To be completed by the SBTi</i>
1. Does the contractor or their family members have any financial interests or similar in the SBTi, its customers, partners or potential competitors?	Yes / No / NA		
2. Has the contractor or their family members ever received gifts or gratuities from the SBTi, its customers, partners or potential competitors that could influence and/or create a bias in undertaking the role?	Yes / No / NA		
3. Does the contractor own or have partial interest in any intellectual properties, patents, licenses or copyrights that could be relevant to their work with SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		
4. Does the contractor have access to or know any inside information about the SBTi or any of the SBTi's customers that could be used for personal gain?	Yes / No / NA		
5. Does the contractor have any investments or financial obligations that could create conflicts of interest with their duties with the SBTi, or influence their decision making?	Yes / No / NA		
Section 2: Business Conflicts			

6. Has the contractor contributed to SBTi technical products in the past, as advisor or author, including but not limited to development of methodological positions?	Yes / No / NA		
7. Does the contractor have outside employment or consulting arrangements with any organization that may be perceived to conflict with their role and responsibilities with the SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		
8. Has the contractor ever received sponsorship or funding from organizations that could be perceived as presenting a conflict of interest with their duties with the SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		
9. Does the contractor have any professional relationships with individuals or organizations that could lead to the perception of a conflict of interest with their duties at SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		
10. Has the contractor entered into any licensing agreements or contractual arrangements that could create a conflict of interest with their work at SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		
11. Does the contractor receive any employee benefits or perks that could lead to a conflict of interest with their work with the SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		
12. Does the contractor have any relevant party transactions, relationships or business dealings with the SBTi, its customers, partners or potential competitors?	Yes / No / NA		
13. Does the contractor have any consulting relationships with organizations that could create a conflict of interest with their work at the SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		
14. Does the contractor have any other business interests or investments that could create a conflict of interest with their work at SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		

15. Does the contractor have involvement in, or serve on the board of directors or advisory board for any organization that may have current or potential business dealings with the SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		
16. Has the contractor ever worked for or had any business relationships with vendors, contractors or suppliers to the SBTi that could be perceived as a conflict of interest?	Yes / No / NA		
Personal Conflicts			
17. Has the contractor had any personal relationships with customers, partners or competitors of the SBTi, or other parties related to the SBTi and its functions, that could lead to a lack of impartiality in performing their role with the SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		
18. Does the contractor have any family members who do business or work for the SBTi, its customers, partners or potential competitors?	Yes / No / NA		
19. Does the contractor have any family businesses or interests that could create conflicts of interest with their duties with the SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		
20. Does the contractor have any political affiliations or activities that could present a potential conflict of interest with their work with the SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		
21. Does the contractor participate in any non-profit organizations that could be related to the interests of the SBTi or create a conflict of interest with their work with the SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		
22. Is the contractor involved or may have future involvement in any legal proceedings that could create a conflict of interest with their work with the SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		

23. Has the contractor made any public statements that could create the perception of a conflict of interest with their work with the SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		
24. Does the contractor participate in or lead any educational activities that could create a conflict of interest with their work with the SBTi?	Yes / No / NA		
25. Does the contractor have any other perceived or actual conflicts of interest that are not outlined above?	Yes / No / NA		
Recommendation	<i>[To be completed by the SBTi]</i>		



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